



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Smith Chief Deputy

Law of the Month January 2017

Following Too Close

Now that we are experiencing Wisconsin's normal January weather, the Dodge County Sheriff's Office is responding to many crashes that could have been avoided had driver's not been following too close or tailgating. Many of these crashes are minor where the drivers lose control and slide into the rear bumper of a car in front of them. Others are more severe with substantial damage or injuries. Following too close has a forfeiture of \$200.50 along with 3 demerit points.

Wisconsin State Statute 346.14 states: *"The operator of a motor vehicle shall not follow another vehicle more closely than is reasonable and prudent, having due regard for the speed of such vehicle and the traffic upon and the condition of the highway. In short, drivers are required to reduce their speed for many reasons which include weather or highway conditions."*

Furthermore the statute states: *"Upon a highway outside a business or residence district, the operator of any motor truck with a gross weight of more than 10,000 pounds or of any motor vehicle which is drawing or towing another vehicle where the combined gross weight is more than 10,000 pounds shall do all of the following:*

- 1. Keep the vehicle he or she is operating at a distance of not less than 500 feet to the rear of any vehicle immediately preceding it, being driven in the same direction.*
- 2. Leave sufficient space so that an overtaking vehicle may enter and occupy such space without danger."*

So in short, please remember that if the vehicle in front of you must suddenly come to a stop, you must have sufficient distance between you so that you can stop before colliding with that vehicle. If you rear-end a vehicle, you are likely in violation of this statute.

For you truck drivers out there, please remember that you are generally obligated to maintain 500 feet between you and the next vehicle in front of you. There are only a few exceptions listed such as overtaking and passing and that must occur within one mile.

It is clear that this is something that everyone needs to be a bit more aware of. Following too close is not only dangerous but also is a frequent cause of road rage. Pay attention to your following distances out there and remember that when you are traveling at higher speeds or in inclement weather, your following distances will need to increase. Knowledge of and following this law can make your commute not only safer but less stressful as well.